
**Health Care & Wellness
Committee**

ESSB 6360

Brief Description: Establishing a work group on primary care medical practice.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Keiser, Swecker, Fairley, Hewitt, Schoesler and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Creates a legislative work group to study issues related to primary care medical practice.

Hearing Date: 2/25/08

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Recent reports indicate the number of United States medical school graduates entering family practice residencies dropped by 50 percent between 1997 and 2005. In 2006 the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) reported primary care provider shortages throughout 16 of the state's 39 counties, and within specific areas or populations of 38 counties.

Summary of Bill:

The work group on Primary Care Medical Practice (work group) is established. Membership includes one Senator and one Representative from each caucus of the House and Senate, and appointments by the Director of the Health Care Authority (HCA) that include representatives of primary care physicians, community clinics, and health plans, and the HCA. The HCA representative must chair the work group.

The work group must examine ways to recruit and retain primary care physicians, and options for providing greater reimbursement for physicians who exhibit best practices, such as: ensuring all patients have access to nurse consultants; encourage mammograms; implement strategies to

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reduce patients' use of non-emergent emergency-room care; communicate with patients electronically; and effectively manage blood sugar levels of patients with diabetes.

The work group will be supported by staff of the Senate and House of Representatives. Findings must be reported by December 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.